

Arizona's Nongame News



Arizona Game and Fish Department Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program



Bald Eagle Special Edition

March 2003

Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee



After the bald eagle was listed as endangered in 1978, land and wildlife resource managers were charged with recovering the species. Since bald eagles occur across the state on lands managed by different federal, state, and local agencies, Native American Tribes, and private property, coordination of this recovery became complex.

In 1984, ten agencies recognized the need for an oversight committee to coordinate recovery efforts. And so, the Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee was formed. For 19 years, the committee has met twice each year to discuss bald eagle biology, and to implement management practices to conserve the species. In that time, the ten member committee has grown to 18, representing the full spectrum of government entities throughout the State. *

25th Anniversary of the Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program



In 1978, the U.S. Forest Service was interested in studying the bald eagles below Bartlett Dam, and enlisted the help of two Audubon Society volunteers to monitor this breeding pair. Little did they know this effort would lay the foundation for a nationally recognized conservation initiative lasting 25 years!

The Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program (ABENWP) has grown from those two volunteers, into 20 to 24 biologists that monitor up to 15 breeding areas annually. In addition to monitoring the breeding attempt, nestwatchers provide on-site education to recreationists who visit bald eagle breeding areas, and determine when bald eagles are in life-threatening situations. In 25 years, the ABENWP has saved over 60 nestlings in life-threatening situations. That's the equivalent of nearly two years worth of productivity in Arizona!

This year will mark the 25th Anniversary of the ABENWP. In addition to this milestone, the program will contract a record 24 individuals to monitor 12-15 breeding areas throughout the state. The public can visit contractors at the following sites to view the bald eagles, and learn about the breeding status:

Needle Rock Recreation Area near Rio Verde
Call the U.S.F.S. Cave Creek R.D. (480) 595-3300

Verde River below Bartlett Lake
Call the U.S.F.S. Cave Creek R.D. (480) 595-3300

Luna Lake near Alpine
Call the U.S.F.S. Alpine R.D. (928) 339-4384

Verde River near Sycamore Canyon (Clarkdale)
Call the U.S.F.S. Sedona R.D. (928) 282-4119 *

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Arizona's Bald Eagle Winter Count

Since 1992, the Arizona Game and Fish Department has been conducting an annual bald eagle winter count. With help from many different land and wildlife resource agencies and a large volunteer effort, Arizona's count averages 300+ wintering bald eagles.

The last two years of the winter count have perplexed biologists as we documented a record low of 216 bald eagles in 2001, and near a record high of 402 in 2002. We believe weather may be the influencing factor that affects the annual survey.

Winter count information is supplied to national coordinators and used to determine the species population size across the United States. *

Fun Fact

Bald eagle's vision is eight times better than human's. If you want to see like a bald eagle, looking through a pair of binoculars will accomplish what they see normally. *

Private Donations Help Bald Eagle Management

Over the last few years, private organizations and members of the public have contributed funds or services to help conserve Arizona's Bald Eagles. In addition to the many anonymous donations received from visitors at the Verde Canyon Railroad's Donation Box, the Arizona Game and Fish Department would like to extend a heartfelt **Thank You** to the following organizations/individuals for their support over the years:

Salt River Project
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
Arizona Public Service
Verde Canyon Railroad
Liberty Wildlife Rehabilitation Foundation
The Frede Family

Donated funds and in-kind contributions help purchase equipment, and can be used to match federal funding for the Arizona Bald Eagle Management Program. *

Satellite Transmitters Answer Life History Questions



Two aspects of bald eagle biology remain a mystery: how long bald eagles live, and where they go when not breeding. These questions have intrigued biologists for some time. Until recently, the technology has not existed to help answer these questions.

In the spring of 2002, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Arizona Game and Fish Department deployed 8 satellite transmitters on nestling bald eagles. These transmitters send a location signal to a satellite, which is then downloaded into a computer. This process eliminates the large manpower cost to manually track each nestling.

Of the eight bald eagles tracked, two fell prey to other animals: one to a great-horned owl and the other to a coyote.

The remaining six bald eagles traveled north two months after leaving the nest in Arizona. Their first migration was completed in four to six days with destinations as far north as Oregon, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, and Kansas.

After Arizona's hot summer months, these juveniles returned to Arizona. We were lucky to record the daily movements of one of our juveniles during its southerly migration. In a little over seven hours, the youngster traveled 321 miles! Once here, they visited their nest sites, then traveled throughout Arizona's river and lake systems. Two juveniles even spent some time down in Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico.

The details of these migrations can be found on the Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee's web page: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix/SWBEMC>
Updates to these bald eagle movements will be posted on this site for the next three years, as long as the batteries transmit.

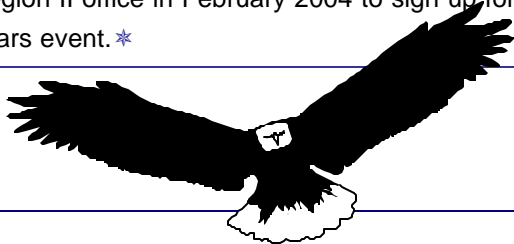
We will be deploying six more transmitters on this year's nestling bald eagles. These information will be included on the website when available. *

Bald Eagle Days - Flagstaff

For ten years, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Region II Office has organized and conducted the Bald Eagle Days Workshop to celebrate the large number of wintering bald eagles near Flagstaff.

The workshop begins with an Arizona Bald Eagle Management presentation, followed by a Wintering Habitat presentation. After, attendees take a field trip to the surrounding Flagstaff lakes to observe some of the 300+ bald eagles that visit the state.

This year was another success. Because of its popularity, the Department hosted two sessions with 104 attending. The annual Bald Eagle Days Workshop occurs on the third Saturday of February. Contact the Region II office in February 2004 to sign up for next years event. *



2003 Bald Eagle Breeding Season Begins

It is that time of year again – many of our bald eagles have already laid eggs. After our February Occupancy and Reproductive Assessment Flight provided by Salt River Project and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, here is where we stand.

Incubating

Bartlett – Nest 1	Orme – Nest 6
Blue Point – Nest 11	Perkinsville – Nest 4
Bulldog – Nest 1	Pleasant – Nest 2
Dupont – Nest 2	Rodeo – Nest 2
Fort McDowell – Nest 16	Sheep – Nest 1
Granite Reef – Nest 2	Suicide – Nest 1
Horse Mesa – Nest 4	Tonto – Nest 2
Horseshoe – Nest 11	Tower – Nest 8
Luna – Nest 1	

Hatched

Box Bar – Nest 3 (1+)	Doka – Nest 2 (1)
Needle Rock – Nest 3 (1+)	Sycamore – Nest 4 (2)

Failed

Lynx – Nest 1*

Recycle Monofilament and Save Wildlife

The Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee are implementing a Monofilament Recovery Program (MRP). Modeled after a program in Florida, the MRP is dedicated to helping clean up Arizona's recreation areas and reducing litter's effects on wildlife.

Improperly disposed monofilament can last years in the environment, where it can be consumed by or entangle a variety of wildlife including waterfowl, bald eagles, ospreys and even pets. It can also be hazardous to boat motors and people hiking, swimming or diving.

The MRP has two Phases. Phase I is establishing indoor collection sites of Monofilament Recovery Containers at local fishing license dealers and tackle shops. Distributed by Pure Fishing, parent company of Berkley®, the container has two cardboard boxes, one for monofilament and the other for spools. Both boxes have UPS postage-paid labels so when full, they can be taped shut and shipped back to Pure Fishing for recycling.

Phase II is establishing an outdoor collection sites by installing Monofilament Recovery Bins at boat ramps and docks of fishable waters throughout the state. The bin is made of four PVC pieces that can be easily glued together. Coordinators of the program are looking for the public's help in identifying areas of need and construction these bins. The total cost of the complete unit is under \$20. The Arizona Game and Fish Department will provide assembly and installation instructions, stickers and signs. For information, contact Jorge Canaca at (602) 789-3569, or James Driscoll at (602) 789-3581. *



Another New Bald Eagle Breeding Area Discovered

Every year we have new breeding areas to report. The newest is located on the lower Salt River below Saguaro Lake. Once part of a larger breeding area upstream, this new pair set up house in the Blue Point breeding pair's back yard. The new breeding area is called Bulldog, named after the nest cliff. *

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